

29 JUL 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Personnel

FROM :   
Chief, Benefits and Services Division

SUBJECT : Procedures for Counseling Unwed Mothers

1. Usually PAB is notified by a supervisor or a personnel officer that an office has an unmarried expectant mother, and PAB is requested to interview and counsel the girl. Occasionally, one of the girls will call us themselves. Sometimes during the exit-processing procedure or when the LWOP action is being processed, it will surface that a maternity case is actually an unwed mother.

2. During the counseling interview, the PAB counselor attempts to reassure the girl involved. Frequently she is very nervous and upset. Several of them have thought they were in imminent danger of being fired as soon as the Agency became aware of the situation. The girl is given the usual exit-processing information, with two exceptions: (a) she is asked to send the doctor's certificate directly to the PAB counselor, and (b) she is asked to call the PAB counselor when the baby is born, and again when she has a firm return to duty date.

3. Further than this, the counselor attempts to ascertain (tactfully) whether there is any possibility of eventual marriage, whether the girl can expect any financial support from the baby's father, and what kind of reaction the girl has had from her family, especially her parents. Obviously, there are enormous difficulties when the girl is rejected by her parents, is comparatively low grade level, receives no financial (or other) help from the responsible man, does not have much leave, and has to go on extended leave without pay. The problems are compounded when the girl has a difficult pregnancy and has to use leave before she would normally have had to do so.

4. Since the circumstances vary with each person interviewed, it is difficult to set any definite guidelines as to what should be discussed and how it should be handled. If there is a possibility of marriage, the girl is advised to let the counselor know as soon as possible so that the necessary paperwork can be initiated. Frequently the expected marriage does not materialize.

5. The hospitalization policy is carefully checked to make sure the girl has coverage, and she is briefed on procedures concerning changing from single only to family plan while in a pay status. PAB will follow through on this if the girl does marry while on leave and/or has the baby while she is still in a pay status. Otherwise she is advised to contact the Insurance Branch immediately upon her return to duty. Her designation of beneficiary on FEGLI is checked, and particularly if there is a prior designation on file, she is briefed on the effect this would have on her expected child.

6. Finances are discussed with the girl, and if she will have to go on LWOP, she is advised to obtain a loan from the Credit Union while she is still in a pay status. If she waits until she is on LWOP, the Credit Union will refuse the loan. In very rare instances, and where there are other complicating circumstances, small PSAS loans have been obtained for the girls.

7. Sometimes the girl will request a different shift from that to which she is currently assigned. Again depending on individual circumstances, the girl will either be advised to see her personnel officer, or the PAB counselor might call the personnel officer. Instances of the girl wishing to be transferred to a completely different office because of reaction in the office to her pregnancy are now very rare. In transfer cases the Chief or Deputy Chief, PAB will contact appropriate personnel officers in the Office of Personnel, Office of Security or [redacted] and attempt to make a temporary placement. The girl normally remains on the staffing complement of her original office until after the baby is born and she is ready to return to duty. This is the only way that temporary placement can normally be made and all parties must understand. Many individuals in these circumstances eventually return to their original offices. If not, PAB will determine possible staffing needs from SPD and contact personnel officers to arrange a permanent new assignment upon return to duty.

8. At an appropriate time the girl is given "last working day" instructions, and she is told that she will be processed by the same counselor rather than by the person who routinely does the exit processing. The person handling exit-processing is given all the details for preparation of the required card, and inclusion in the list, but "maternity" is not shown on either card or list. All routine procedures for annotating card and logging the personnel action are followed.

9. Following the interview, the counselor advises the Chief Nurse, on extension [redacted]. This is in order to prevent OMS sending a routine enquiry to the office while the girl is on sick leave. The Office of Security is also advised (extension [redacted]). If the counselor has been able to ascertain whether or not the father of the baby is an Agency

employee Security is so informed at this time. Security makes their own determination as to whether or not they wish to interview the girl. In cases where the girl has been rejected by her parents, the PAB counselor has an additional problem because the girl tends to call the counselor whenever any problem comes up that she would normally have discussed with her mother.

10. On the last working day, when the girl concerned is actually checking out, PAB calls the Insurance Branch and informs the person who will be doing the exit-processing that this is a special case, i.e., an unwed mother, in order to avoid any possible embarrassment during the insurance briefing, and also to ensure that the girl receives the necessary instructions concerning her medical claims.

11. The girl's personnel officer is also briefed concerning the processing of the LWOP action, and anything else which surfaced during the interview which is absolutely necessary for her to know. The personnel officer is requested to make sure the action says Medical and not Maternity, and to send it directly to the counselor in PAB, who then notifies Staff Personnel Division. One of SPD's officers will then sign the action the next time he/she comes to Headquarters. The counselor shows the signing officer the doctor's certificate, and then keeps it in PAB. PAB does not suggest that Advance Sick Leave is available, but if questioned, will provide necessary information. The Personnel Officers are all usually aware that Advance Sick Leave may be requested provided an adequate doctor's certificate can be obtained.

12. When the girl is ready to return to duty, she advises PAB, hopefully thirty days ahead of time. The PAB counselor calls SPD with the necessary information and advises them that this is one of our special cases. If the girl has any trouble with her badge when she returns to work, the PAB counselor goes down to the Badge Office and tries to straighten it out.

13. Most of the girls keep their babies nowadays. With certain exceptions, the choice seems to have been between abortion and keeping the baby after birth. Some of the girls who have intended to place their baby for adoption have reneged at the last moment and kept the child. PAB does not attempt to influence the girl in any way concerning the decisions she should make in this regard. If questioned, the counselor will discuss the pros and cons of each choice. All the girls interviewed seem to have made up their minds before they come in here, and in spite of several changes of mind caused by various influences to which they are subjected during the waiting period, invariably in the end do exactly what they wanted to do in the beginning. This now means keeping the baby. If at the time of the original interview, they have already decided on an abortion, this is what they do, and soon.

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14. Since the single plan now covers both maternity and abortion, it has not been necessary for several years to contact such agencies as the Florence Crittendon Home. The girls stay at work, and if necessary, find their own apartments or other places to live. The girls do have an extremely hard time, however, and no matter how well they handle the situation, continue to have problems for years to come and frequently return to PAB for counseling. When appropriate PAB will suggest referral to OMS for professional counseling.

15. Although procedures for dealing with unwed mothers in cases where the girl is assigned overseas have not been discussed above, the situation remains basically the same and involves working with the responsible component personnel officer on whatever requirements may be appropriate. STATINTL



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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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(Note from DD/Pers - 29 Aug 77)

"DD/Pers/SP - Let's keep this as is and treat it as an informal S.O.P. Please let us know as new cases arise and we'll want to be kept abreast of progress."

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